

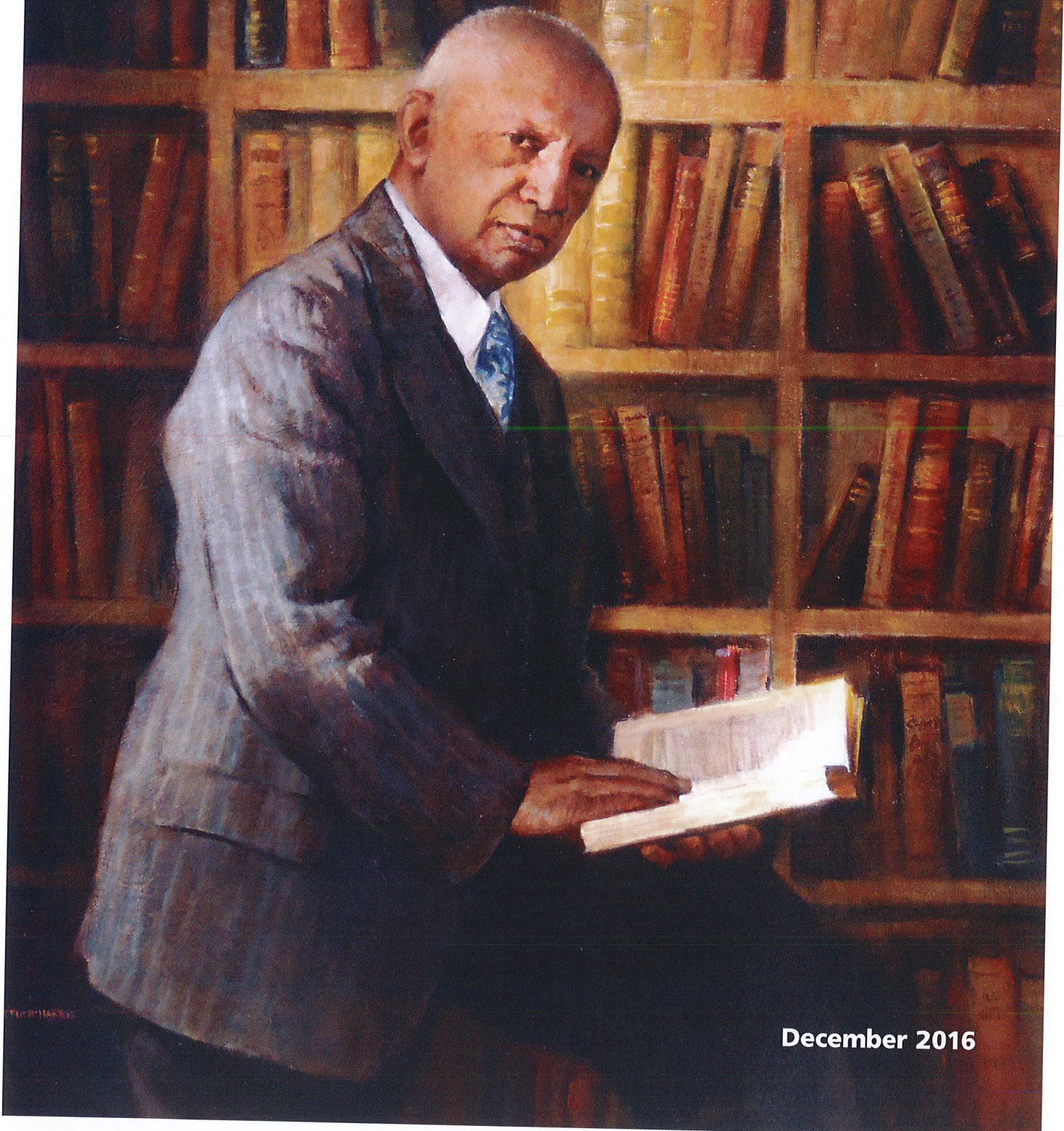
Harpers Ferry Center  
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# Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site (CAWO)

## Long-Range Interpretive Plan: Executive Summary



December 2016



## **Executive Summary**

**Prepared under Order No. P14PD02602  
Task Order No. 3  
Long-Range Interpretive Plan for  
Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site**

**Prepared under Contract No. P13PC00045**

**For:  
Interpretive Planning Services  
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### **Front cover:**

**Artwork painted by National  
Park Service employee Sandra  
Harris (2011). Painting based on  
a February 1948, Scurlock Studio  
black and white photograph of  
Dr. Carter G. Woodson.**

**Photograph contained in the Scurlock  
Studio Records, Archives Center,  
National Museum of American History,  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.**

## Introduction

*“The Woodson Home is a historic site because of the work that was done there and the influence of Dr. Woodson on American history and historiography . . . and because his work helped bring changes in American attitudes concerning Black people. This house is a priceless American treasure that must not be lost.”*

Congresswoman Eleanor Norton Holmes

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan defines the overall vision and long-term interpretive goals of the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site. The interpretive planning process helps the site consider ideas, make choices, and set priorities about interpretation and education programming, creating a lens through which all audiences can come to understand the importance of Dr. Woodson’s work and his legacy.



**Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton speaking at the 2011 Birthday Celebration of Carter G. Woodson at Shiloh Baptist Church.**

NPS Photo



## Foundation For Planning

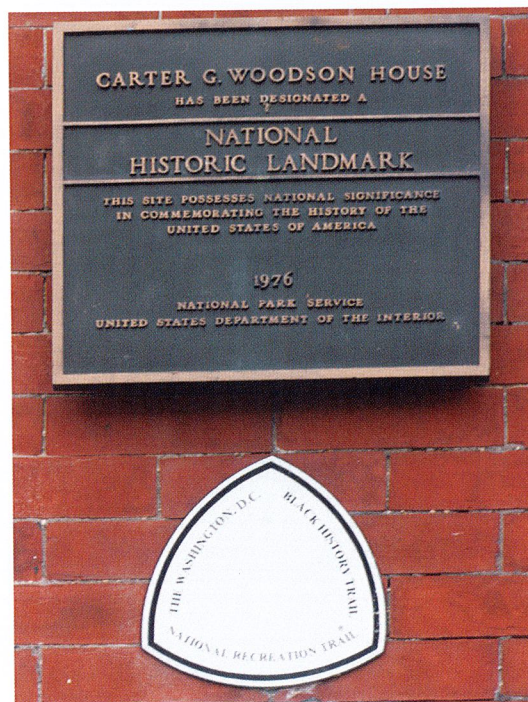
### Purpose of the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site

*Purpose statements summarize the reasons a park is included in the National Park System. They are derived from the legislation or Presidential Proclamation that created the park and the legislation that created the National Park Service.*

*The purpose of Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site is to inspire and educate through the preservation of the home, life, and legacy of the preeminent historian and educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson.*

Plaque on the facade of 1428 9th Street, N.W. designating the house as a National Historic Landmark.

NPS Photo



### Significance

*Statements of significance describe a park's distinctive natural, cultural, or recreational resources and values that provide the rationale for national recognition and preservation of the site.*

- The Carter G. Woodson Home was the residence of Dr. Woodson from 1922 until 1950, serving as a center for his pioneering work on scholarly research of African American history and his groundbreaking educational programs that promoted an appreciation of African American culture and history for all people throughout the nation and beyond.
- The Carter G. Woodson Home was a community focal point in the Shaw area of Washington, D.C., where the interaction of African Americans of diverse trades, professions, and economic backgrounds strongly influenced Dr. Woodson's work, research, and teachings.
- While living at his home on Ninth Street NW, Dr. Woodson founded Negro History Week (now Black History Month), which continues to have a broad impact around the world and has inspired similar events celebrating cultural identity and awareness.
- In 1915, Dr. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, later known as the Association for the

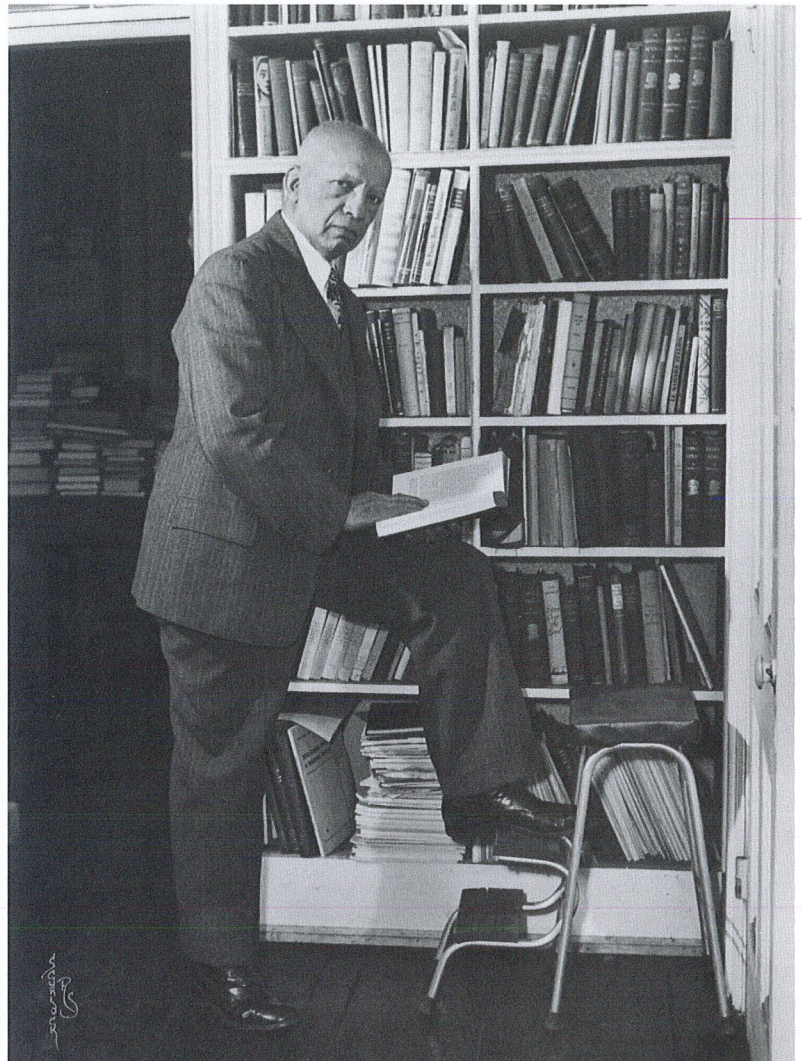


Study of African American Life and History (ASALH). The organization operated out of his home from 1922 until 1971, and continues today to promote his scholarly work and vision.

- Established by Dr. Woodson as an enterprise of ASALH in 1920, Associated Publishers, Inc., was one of the first American publishers to print and distribute the works of African Americans, giving a voice to that traditionally underrepresented group. The books focused on the history and culture of African Americans and African-descended people. Most often, the press's books were published by black scholars, professionally trained and self-taught. Perhaps the most wide-selling book from the press was *The Negro in Our History* (first published in 1922). It was one of the first major textbooks on African American history. Another influential book is his 1921 *The Case of the Negro* (republished as Carter G. Woodson's Appeal). The publishing office was located at his home until ASALH moved to new quarters in 1971.

**1438 9th St., N.W., Washington, D.C.,  
the former home of Dr. Woodson  
and headquarters of ASNLH and  
Associated Publishers, in 2005.**

NPS Photo



**Dr. Carter G. Woodson in his library at 1428 9th Street, N.W.**

Image courtesy  
Scurlock Studio Records,  
Archives Center,  
National Museum of  
American History,  
Smithsonian Institution





### Fundamental Resources and Values

*The National Park Service works to ensure that the resources and values that are fundamental to maintaining a site's significance are preserved for public enjoyment. Fundamental resources and values that support significance statements provide park managers and staff with a measure for what is critical to maintain the integrity of a park.*

#### CARTER G. WOODSON HOME.

The house in which Dr. Woodson lived and worked from 1922 to 1950 is the main tangible fundamental resource remaining connected to Dr. Woodson. Here he wrote many of his articles and books, and held community meetings. Dr. Woodson's scholarly work and advocacy contributed significantly to the cultural identity and awareness of the African American community in the United States and throughout the world. His home served as the headquarters for ASALH from

**The street streetscape near 1438-1443 9th Street, N.W.**

Photo courtesy Library of Congress



1922 until 1971. Dr. Woodson is an icon within the African American community and the house provides a tangible connection to his life and works. Its preservation and interpretation make it the paramount fundamental resource within the national historic site.

#### SHAW AREA STREETScape.

Expanding on the streetscape and alleyscape identified in the general management plan, the context of the Shaw area was identified as fundamental to the site. The neighborhood and streetscape surrounding Woodson's home are fundamental resources because they have not changed significantly since the time Dr. Woodson lived on Ninth Street NW. They give a sense of what Dr. Woodson's surroundings were like when he lived there, which creates a tangible connection to the era in which Dr. Woodson lived. Key places that provide context to the site today include the YWCA, Woodson Park, Shiloh Baptist Church, and the Shaw Heritage Trail. While the Shaw area streetscape is fundamental to the history of Dr. Woodson, it is not part of the authorized boundary of the national historic site.

#### STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS.

A fundamental value of the site is its connection to the struggle for civil rights for all Americans and the belief that everyone deserves dignity and basic human rights. While Woodson's belief in civil rights for African Americans was connected to a broader belief in human rights—and



therefore can be linked to the struggle for “all” Americans for basic rights—his most pressing concern was the struggle for the advancement of blacks’ rights during the era of Jim Crow segregation. Dr. Woodson and his work must be seen in the context of those times.

During the years leading to America’s entry into World War I and the turbulent years after, the entrenched racism in American society found continued expression. For instance, in 1915, the same year that Dr. Carter G. Woodson founded the Association, D.W. Griffith released the film *Birth of a Nation* to a national audience. *Birth of a Nation* was based on the 1905 novel, *The Clansman*. The movie distorted public perceptions of the Reconstruction era, portraying it as a time of ruthless white Republicans and immoral and ignorant black men in control in the south. The movie’s popularity was further enhanced when it was screened in the White House by President Woodrow Wilson. It was during this period that Dr. Woodson and his contemporaries were involved in laying the groundwork for the later civil rights movement. An appreciation of this protracted struggle is imperative to a comprehension of Woodson’s life work, including the founding of the Association and *The Journal of Negro History*, among other initiatives.

In many significant respects the history of blacks in America is a story of constant struggle: the fight to end slavery, the efforts to enjoy

human rights, the battle to secure civil rights and to obtain equal rights were hallmarks. The scholarly work, advocacy, and triumphs of Dr. Woodson and his colleagues during the Jim Crow era laid the groundwork for the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s and provided a template for the leadership that emerged during those times.

### **EDUCATION AND SCHOLARSHIP.**

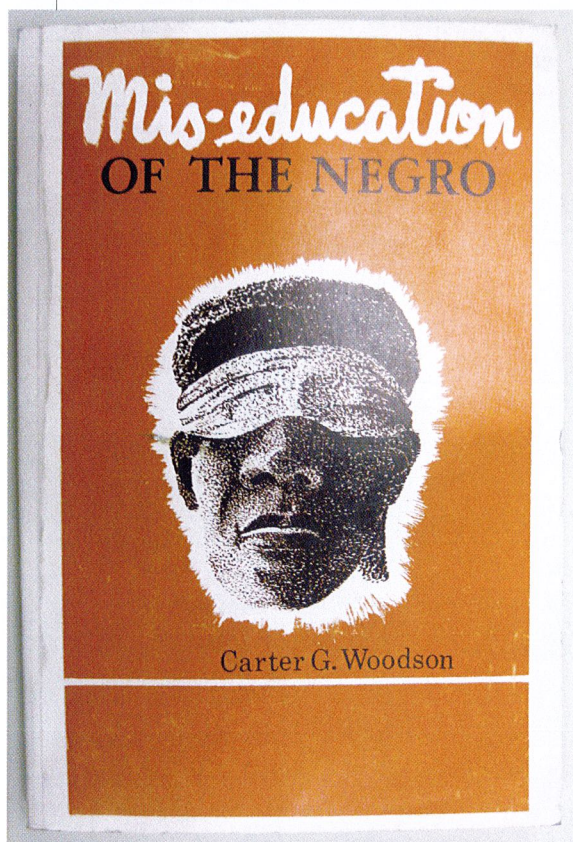
Another fundamental value associated with the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site is education and scholarship, which represents Dr. Woodson’s legacy. As the home of one of the preeminent figures in the study of African American history and heritage, the Woodson site embodies the values of education and scholarship. Dr. Woodson was the founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, now known as ASALH, and he based this educational organization out of his home.

This living connection to his legacy of scholarship continues today with the partnership between the association and the National Park Service.



### Interpretive Themes and Stories (Subthemes)

*Interpretive themes provide the framework for all aspects of park interpretive programming. The themes are intended to inspire connections to the tangible and intangible resources of the site, and to connect to universal human values that transcend both time and culture.*



The cover of the 1969 reprinting of Dr. Woodson's 1933 book, *Mis-education of the Negro*.

NPS Photo

**"THE FATHER OF BLACK HISTORY/BLACK STUDIES."** Through decades of struggles and triumphs, Dr. Carter G. Woodson was driven to change our understanding of American history. Known as the "Father of Black History," Woodson, a historian and social activist, began the observation of Negro History Week in order to ensure that the contributions of African Americans to the growth of this country would be taught and recognized.

### IMPACT OF HIS LEADERSHIP.

Dr. Woodson's visionary leadership broadened his already significant impact on the field of African American history and a broad spectrum of society through rigorous scholarship, mentoring of young scholars, an entrepreneurial spirit, and the founding of organizations, and publications that opened that history to all.

**THE COMMUNITY.** Dr. Woodson's home, frequented by nearly every prominent, influential African American activist and scholar of his day, served as a resource and focal point for the African American community both in the Shaw neighborhood and throughout Washington, D.C., and the nation, providing today's audience with a tangible link to the man, his achievements, and his cultural legacy.



**Dr. Carter G. Woodson at his desk.**

Image courtesy Scurlock Studio Records,  
Archives Center, National Museum of  
American History, Smithsonian Institution

**WOODSON THE MAN.** Dr.

Woodson's rise from poverty and humble beginnings during the challenges of the Jim Crow era, strengthened and encouraged by his remarkable, proud parents who were without formal education and had once been enslaved, and by his own discipline, drive, and determination, serves as inspiration for everyone today who strives to carry on his legacy.

**Management Goals**

The site is currently being rehabilitated after years of neglect that left the building unsafe. A community is working to create an international center for telling the stories of Woodson the man and historian, his vital role in the reform of education globally, and the long-term impact of his work on the cause for civil rights. Interpretation of the Woodson home will add to the rich context of African American intellectual life and activism within the city of Washington and throughout the nation and the world. Both onsite and virtual visitors will be enabled to discover their own connections to the Woodson legacy, and interpretation of the home will serve to raise its local, regional, and national visibility as a unit of the National Park System through:

**INNOVATIVE INTERACTION.**

Stepping outside the comfort zone of mainstream delivery methods and messages (as Dr. Woodson did), Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site will provide an interactive experience using innovative technologies and universal design (meeting and exceeding the Architectural Barriers Act standards) to create distinctive opportunities for visitors to become engaged in the life, organizational work, and contributions of Carter G. Woodson.

**EDUCATIONAL IMPACT.** The site will provide an educational experience around Woodson as a scholar and an institution

builder that will inspire visitors to appreciate the impact of his work and vision during his lifetime and beyond, and will motivate them to further the work of Dr. Woodson and ASALH. Through interpretation of the ways in which Dr. Woodson's focus, determination, and dedication transformed this nation, visitors will be inspired to continue his legacy.

**COMMUNITY BUILDING.** The vision for the Carter G. Woodson home reaches far beyond traditional techniques for the interpretation of historic homes. It addresses the site as a center of community, as a home for ASALH, and as a vital means of connecting with the many educational institutions throughout the world with relationships to Dr. Woodson.

The Carter G. Woodson Home NHS, showing the back wall of 1540 Ninth Street, N.W. being propped up to keep it from collapsing, 2013.

NPS Photo



### Audiences at Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site

*Different audiences have varied needs and expectations. Potential audiences for the Carter G. Woodson story are:*

- The youth audience
- Tourists
- The local community
- The virtual audience
- Special categories, like scholars and researchers, elected officials, and volunteers

Note that each of these audience categories may include non-English speakers and persons with disabilities, whose needs will be met through use of the principles of universal design.

### Formal Partnerships and Potential Partner Organizations

*Partnerships strengthen capacity and promote vigorous communities and strong relationships between people and organizations. Working with others and using their strengths and talents helps to get things done in the park and far beyond its boundaries.*

Organizations with formal partnership agreements with the Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site include members of the Carter Woodson Legacy Coalition, which are:

- ASALH, especially Woodson House Committee Members



- Omega Psi Phi (Dr. Woodson's fraternity)
- Shiloh Baptist Church
- The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Kiamsha Youth Empowerment
- Howard University
- Woodson family

Informal partnerships include:

- Advisory Council for Historic Preservation
- D.C. Cultural Tourism
- Library of Congress
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Shaw Neighborhood Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC)
- Smithsonian Museum of African American History
- Eastern National

Faculty members of several universities have been engaged with the site (in addition to those associated with Carter Woodson Legacy Coalition member Howard University):

- Randall K. Burkett, Curator of African American Collections, Emory University
- Dr. Pero G. Dagbovie, Professor, Graduate Director, Associate Chair of the Department of History, Michigan State University (wrote

Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site's Historic Resource Study)

- Dr. Sandra Jowers-Barber, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, History, and Global Studies, University of the District of Columbia
- Dr. Debra Newman Ham, Professor of History, Morgan State University
- Dr. Alicestyne Turley, Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education, Berea College

Units of the National Park Service in the D.C. area that are engaged with Carter G. Woodson Home National Historic Site or with related themes:

- African American Civil War Memorial
- Civil War Defenses of Washington
- Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
- Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial
- Mary McLeod Bethune Council House
- Underground Railroad Initiative
- African American Experience Fund
- National Parks Conservation Association
- National Capital Parks-East
- National Mall
- National Heritage Area Program

## Recommendations

Recommendations for interpretive programming at the Carter G. Woodson Home NHS are divided into two phases. Phase One covers initiatives that can be implemented prior to the opening of the Woodson home. These are listed below. The recommendations include digital technology, person-to-person programming, and traditional methods like wayside signs. Phase Two describes approaches that are possible once the home is open to the public. Please see the complete Long-Range Interpretive Plan for more details.

### Phase One: Digital technology

- **DIGITAL STORYMAP.** Berea College, under the direction of Dr. Alicestyne Turley, director of the Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education, proposes to work with students in creating a Story Map of Dr. Woodson's legacy, impact, and journey through life that can eventually be included as part of the visitor experience in the Woodson home. Others will be able to upload materials and content to the StoryMap, reinforcing the concept that Dr. Woodson's life has untold ripples that cross the country and echo through the present.
- **DIGITAL ARCHIVE.** A global inventory of Woodson primary source material, building on material assembled for the StoryMap, will not only be a vital resource for Woodson scholars, but will signal an effort to enhance scholarly knowledge of Woodson's work in the digital age. The inventory will eventually identify the location of each of the resources, and bring together all digitized Woodson resources in a comprehensive, accessible data base, hosted by a responsible partner (to be determined).
- **FAMILY HISTORY/HISTORY HARVEST.** A community-based "harvest" of materials related to Dr. Woodson will serve to commemorate and support the on-going influence of Woodson on the community he served and belonged to as a member. It is anticipated that this process will not only find new artifacts and documents, but will also spark new conversations about Dr. Woodson's legacy, and add to a growing digital archive.
- **AUGMENTED REALITY.** A Smartphone-based virtual tour of Dr. Woodson's neighborhood could highlight his connection with streets, buildings, his former neighbors and colleagues, and other aspects of his community with multi-layered information that would bring his world to life. Such a program is tailor-made for engagement with area middle school and high school age students.



## Phase One: Person-to-person programming

- **GUIDED RANGER TOURS.** Building on existing research and staff knowledge, tours will be regularly scheduled and publicized, establishing an ongoing neighborhood presence in the period before the historic home opens to the public.
- **STORY-TELLING IN THE PARK.** Volunteers, retired educators, and education majors from nearby schools will honor Dr. Woodson's love of children with regularly scheduled stories in nearby Carter G. Woodson Memorial Park.
- **NATIONWIDE WOODSON BIRTHDAY PARTIES IN THE SCHOOLS.** This program, to be offered by park partner ASALH, revives a program that successfully promoted knowledge of Carter G. Woodson in elementary schools throughout the nation. Each national branch of the organization will be encouraged to visit one school in honor of the Woodson birthday. NPS can participate in such a program by visiting a nearby school.

## Phase One: Traditional media

- **PUBLICATIONS.** Make a full range of Woodson and Woodson-inspired works available to the public via the park website by providing a link to relevant works offered by Eastern National.
- **WOODSON WEBINARS OFFERED AS NPS TRAINING MODULE.** ASALH can organize, coordinate, and create Woodson webinars for rangers, teachers, churches, and other organizations that would provide material and reinforcement of Dr. Woodson's role in creating Black History Month. NPS can facilitate the timely availability of the webinar to all park personnel.
- **WAYSIDE EXHIBITS.** Two wayside exhibits have been produced and are available for display at community events. Construction at the Woodson home makes it infeasible to install them on site at the present time.

## Conclusion

Interpretation of Dr. Woodson's legacy will add to the rich context of African American intellectual life and activism within the city of Washington and beyond, and attract, engage, educate, and inspire a multicultural and diverse audience to develop a sense of pride in themselves and their ancestors, and, on a larger scale, pride in this country and its history.



**Carter G. Woodson.**

Image courtesy Scurlock  
Studio Records, Archives  
Center, National Museum  
of American History,  
Smithsonian Institution



*I am ready to act, if I can find brave men to help me.*

Carter G. Woodson



## The Planning Team

The following stakeholders contributed their talent and energy to the planning process:

### Association for the Study of African Life and History, Woodson House Committee

Dr. Bettye Gardner\*, Emerita, Department of History, Geography and Global Studies, Coppin State University; Chair

Barbara Spencer Dunn\*, Commissioner, Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture (MCAAHC) and former Executive Director of Kiamsha; Co-Chair

Dorothy Bailey, Governance Committee Chair, Prince George's County Truth Branch, Maryland

Dr. Thomas Battle, Director Emeritus, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

Dr. Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, Professor of History and Director of the Public History Program, Howard University

Dr. Pero G. Dagbovie, Professor of African American history and Graduate School Associate Dean, Michigan State University

Dr. John E. Fleming, Director Emeritus, Cincinnati Museum Center

Dr. Cheryl Renee Gooch, Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Lincoln University

Dr. Jim C. Harper II, Vice President for Programs, North Carolina Central University

Renada Johnson, Executive Director, Kiamsha Youth Empowerment Organization

Dr. Cheryl Laroche, Department of American Studies, University of Maryland

Dr. Lopez Matthews, Digital Production Librarian at Howard University Libraries and Moorland-Spingarn Research Center

Dr. June O. Patton\*, Emerita, Department of History, Governors State University

Tiffany Spriggs, Communications Director, Kiamsha Youth Empowerment Organization

Dr. Alicestyne Turley, Director, Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education and Assistant Professor of African and African American Studies, Berea College

## Community Stakeholders

Melissa Green, Fairfax County Public Schools

Jackie King, Kiamsha Youth Empowerment Organization

Alex Padro, ANC Commissioner, Shaw Neighborhood

Judy Williams\*, Church Historian, Shiloh Baptist Church

## National Park Service

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Katie Callahan Durcan, Acting Central District Manager, National Capital Parks-East (detail assignment)

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